

**REMARKS**

Claims 2 and 13-20 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 2 is amended to even more clearly distinguish from the cited references. Support for the Amendment to claim 2 can be found in Applicant's specification, for example, at page 12, line 20-page 13, line 5. No new matter is added by the amendment.

Examiners Assouad and Berhanu are thanked for the courtesies extended Applicant's undersigned attorney at the June 16 personal interview. At the interview it was agreed that the above amendments likely overcome the rejections.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments:

(a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 14-17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Young (U.S. Patent No. 7,061,139) in view of Ijntema (U.S. Patent No. 4,775,827) and further in view of Murase (Japanese Patent Document No. 2000-050525). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Young when modified in view of Ijntema and in view of Murase fails to disclose or render obvious the combination of features recited in independent claim 2. In particular, the references fail to disclose or render obvious "a judgment circuit that judges the degradation of the storage battery based on a charging time of the storage battery from a time when the

control circuit controls the output voltage of the converter to return to the steady state voltage to a time when the battery is fully charged, the judgment circuit using the charging time to determine whether the storage battery is degraded or normal, a degraded storage battery having a maximum storage capacity that is less than a maximum storage capacity of a new storage battery of the same kind thereof' as recited in independent claim 2.

In rejecting Applicant's claims, the Office Action relies on Ijntema as determining battery degradation. However, though Ijntema measures a charging time of a battery, the measurement is merely used to determine the state of charge of the battery (that is, whether the battery is completely charged or not, including the amount of complete charge (for example, 80%, etc.)). Ijntema does not determine battery degradation, which is the ability of a battery to hold a charge (for example, the maximum storage capacity of the battery). See Ijntema Abstract and col. 5, lines 26-30. Thus, claim 2 is patentable. Accordingly, claims 14-17 and 19 are patentable by their dependence on claim 2 for at least the reasons explained above regarding claim 2. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Young in view of Ijntema in view of Murase and further in view of Pacholok (U.S. Patent No. 5,196,780). Pacholok fails to overcome the deficiencies of Ijntema explained above regarding claim 2. Thus, claim 13 is patentable for at least the reasons explained above regarding claim 2. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Young in view of Ijntema in further view of Murase. Claim 18 by its dependence on claim 2 is patentable for at least the reasons explained above regarding claim 2. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Young in view of Ijntema in view of Murase in further view of Faria (U.S. Patent No. 6,295,215). Faria fails to overcome

the deficiencies of Ijntema explained above regarding claim 2. Thus, claim 20 is patentable by its dependence on claim 2 for at least the reasons explained above regarding claim 2. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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